

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Roseate Spoonbill

Platalea ajaja

Rarity Rank: S3/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Photo by Nancy Webb

Identification:

- Wading bird with a long, flat, spoon-like bill
- Adults have a naked, greenish head; white neck, back and upper breast; red wing coverts and an orange tail; rest of body and wings pink
- Length of adults is 76 to 86 cm, wingspread of 1.3 m
- Flies in small to medium sized flocks
- Fledglings are white with a feathered head

Habitat:

- Prefers freshwater but is also known to inhabit varieties of marine and brackish waters
- Forages in shallow water ponds or sloughs in saline to freshwater marshes
- Nests over standing water in shrubs and small trees with other colonial birds

Food habits:

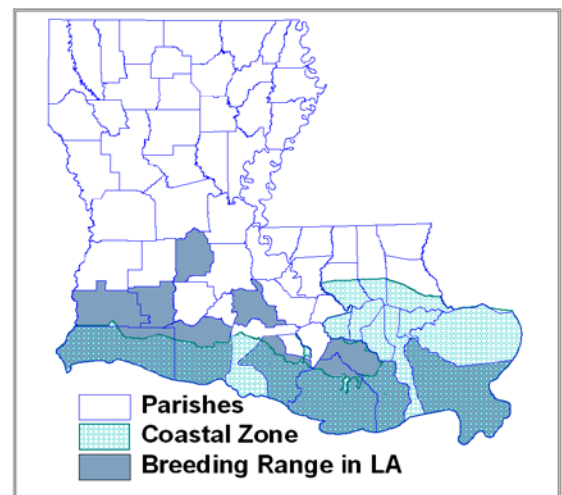
Moves bill side to side in water to capture various small fish, crustaceans, mollusks and insects

Range:

- Local resident along the coasts of Texas, Louisiana and Florida as well as the central west Mexican coast and south to central Chile and Argentina
- In winter, some northern-breeding individuals move south

Reproduction:

- In Louisiana, breeds early spring to summer
- Female builds the nest while the male gathers materials abundant in the area (twigs, leaves, bark, moss, etc)
- Eggs are ovate to elliptical ovate or elongate ovate in shape with a rough granular texture and dirty white color that may have a pink or blue-green tint and may also be spotted in brown, purple or drab
- Incubation is accomplished by both sexes, switching up to three times daily
- Both male and female feed fledglings for two months, at which time they leave the colony and will begin breeding at three years



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Threats:

- Shooting and trapping of other species can disrupt behavior
- Contaminants such as pollution and pesticides
- Degredation of coastal habitat from salt water intrusion, industrial activities, canal dredging and other hydrologic alterations
- Coastal land loss

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Restoration efforts along coastal ecosystems involving the release of Mississippi River water into marshes and estuaries
- Identify and monitor sources of contamination
- Create buffer zones for boating traffic around nesting colonies
- Habitat creation with dredge materials

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Barataria, Terrebonne, Atchafalaya, Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine



Photos by Larry Korhnak



© Korhnak

References:

- Dumas, J. V. 2000. Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*). In The Birds of North America, No. 490 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: August 9, 2007).

Funding provided by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

For more information, please visit our Web pages at

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/experience/naturalheritage or 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869